

PREVENTION \* LAW ENFORCEMENT \* RESEARCH

# Maine Fire Marshal News

Maine State Fire Marshal's Office • Fire Research  
Maine Department of Public Safety  
Fire Marshal's Web Page

June 2011

Summer 2011 Vol. 2, Issue No. 10

## WELCOME!

Welcome to this issue of the *Maine Fire Marshal News*. Please take some time to read the newsletter and send us your own article for a future publication or comments in general. As always, we do appreciate the feedback on the newsletter many of you have sent over the years and look forward to hearing from you more in the future.



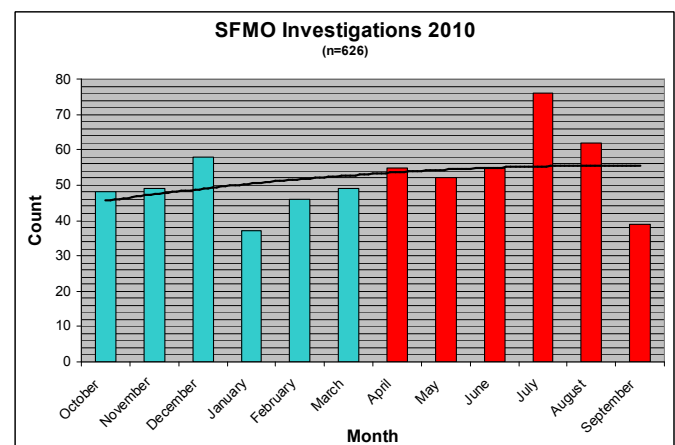
### A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

At last summer is here! Fire as you all know has seasonal characteristics which I usually discuss and make recommendations regarding increased safety. Instead of that

I'd like to discuss how the Fire Marshal's Office operations change from season to season or from colder to warmer months.

First, the volume of fire investigations will, generally speaking, remain steady with a statistically insignificant increase during the warmer months. However, it does appear that

local fire departments will call on our investigators more in the summer when the fires are not as easily determined to be accidental in nature. As such, they'll look to us for an answer. The graph below shows you the distribution of investigations by month for 2010.



Certainly, fire fatalities occur more in the colder months and they require significant attention. So, from an operations perspective, the investigative workload, in terms of numbers of investigations, appears to be steady throughout the year. However the actual labor involved in the investigation may vary depending upon type. For instance a fire fatality will take more time as will an arson. It should be noted that our investigators will be called out to fireworks displays in addition to amusement park events which are primarily a warmer weather event.

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So, as I look back on this most recent year and think about workload seasonality over the years it's pretty clear that we're busy all year. All that changes is the type of work being done and that is due, obviously, to our geographic location and the things Mainers do as the seasons change.

Now, I'd like to wish you and yours, on behalf of the entire Fire Marshal's staff, a happy and safe summer.

Sincerely,



John C. Dean  
Fire Marshal



## **VISION 20/20 RELEASES FIRE PREVENTION ADVOCACY TOOL KIT**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The Fire Prevention Advocacy Tool Kit is the child of Vision 20/20's strategy #1: *Increase Advocacy for Fire Prevention*. The lead organization was, of course, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Life Safety Section

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The tool kit provides considerable information on proven fire prevention strategies and how to advocate for them, implement them, and then evaluate them to learn from them. There is also detailed information on presenting information to and reaching specific audiences such as policy makers and the public in general. The tool kit is laden with information on data sources that can be used to make the case for fire prevention in your community.

In summary, the tool kit provides guidance to help fire departments advocate for increased fire prevention investment. I'd urge you all to take a look at the tool kit particularly if you're seeking additional funding from your local community, foundations and other granting organizations, or from other sources. Follow this link to the tool kit!

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**It is the good fortune of the Fire  
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In addition, a portion of the funds will be used to design and produce brochures on the dangers of smoking while on oxygen therapy in addition to incidents of children involved in the ignition of fires. The brochures will be distributed to various health care facilities and made available to older adults and parents. It is hoped the brochures will bring more meaningful fire prevention and safety information to these particular audiences as well as those who serve them.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the United States Fire Administration. For more information on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, please visit the Program Website at <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/>, or contact the Grants Program Office at 1-866-274-0960. For more information on the USFA, please visit the Website at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>

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Would you let your child play with fire?

Every year thousands of Americans, mostly children, are hurt by consumer fireworks such as sparklers and firecrackers. Many are burned, scarred or disfigured by fireworks that are legal, but still very dangerous and cause fires. This year, an alliance of health and safety advocates asks you to keep fireworks from hurting your family. The risk is too great.

*Leave fireworks to the professionals.*

National Fire Protection Association along with American Academy of Family Physicians • American Academy of Ophthalmology • American Academy of Pediatrics • American Association for Hand Surgery • American Association of Public Health Physicians • American Burn Association • American College of Emergency Physicians • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • Emergency Nurses Association • Fire Department Safety Officers Association • International Association of Arson Investigators • International Association of Fire Chiefs • International Association of Fire Fighters • International Fire Marshals Association • Metropolitan Fire Chiefs • National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners • National Association of School Nurses • National Association of State Fire Marshals • National Volunteer Fire Council • Prevent Blindness America

## **SACO FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS A NEW FIRE STATION**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The Saco Fire Department has a new fire station. The department began their push for the new facility back in the 1970s but it took until 2009 to get all the citizens and town officials on board to support the project. The outcome is considerable as anyone who has visited the new facility on North Street in Saco will testify.

Voters of Saco approved the 21,600 Sq. Ft. in a special election held back in February of

2010. The project, which was finished on schedule, includes an administrative wing on the first floor, firefighter living quarters, a kitchen-dining area, laundry, and fitness room. There are individual sleeping rooms on the second floor that include a bed, desk and bureau. Chief Duross said it is “beautiful.”



New Saco Fire Department Building on North St. in Saco

Fire Marshal Dean, who spoke at the dedication, said that this was a great example of good planning, design, and community support. Unlike the old station there is ample room for all of Saco’s fire apparatus. Next time you’re in Saco go take a look.

## **IMAGINE BUYING 18,000 COUNTERFEIT SMOKE DETECTORS?**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

That’s just what happened to the Atlanta Fire & Rescue Department in it’s well intended effort to install smoke detectors in areas of the city most in need.

The detectors were sold by a company called Silver Sales. What distinguishes the alarms is a UL label in the form of a hologram that is also missing the UL number below the label. The detectors had been distributed to areas in need beginning in 2006. Now Atlanta Fire and Rescue is in the process of recalling them. It’s difficult enough to get the devices into homes that need them let alone get the bad ones back out! Good luck Atlanta.

Maine Fire Marshal News





## **THE NFPA ANNOUNCES THE 2011 FIRE PREVENTION WEEK THEME**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The 2011 National Fire Protection Association Fire Prevention Week theme is *“Protect Your Family From Fire.”* This theme is particularly salient because it focuses on the very place where most tragic fires occur: our homes.

As always, the NFPA provides loads of factsheets and other educational materials for teachers, the fire service and families in all languages. Go to the following site for your information today!

<http://www.firepreventionweek.org>

## **NELSON COLLINS AND JOHN MORSE RETIRE**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The Fire Marshal’s Office is losing two veteran officers. Assistant Fire Marshal Nelson Collins will step down along with fire investigator John Morse. They both will be very much missed.

Nelson Collins began his career with the Fire Marshal’s Office in 1987 as a plans reviewer, moved up to supervise the fire prevention division and eventually became an Assistant Fire Marshal. Nelson probably knows more about fire codes, and fire prevention in the Office of the Fire Marshal, than any individual in Maine. A skilled tactician at telling people things they didn’t want to hear, Nelson managed many delicate situations with considerable skill. His management skill is so good that I don’t believe you could teach someone what Nelson knows. He just knows it intuitively and is a living dictionary when it came to fire code terminology and interpretation.

Aside from the institutional knowledge Nelson possessed, what will be missed most is his kind affable demeanor. Those of us who were lucky to have worked with him are better for it but we will really miss him each and every day. We wish him well in retirement and hope he’ll come and see us when he has some time. Best wishes Nelson!



Assistant Fire Marshal Nelson Collins (left) with Dave Blake in 2008

John Morse began his career as an inspector with the office and then moved over to fire investigations. He started in 1981. John was a smart investigator with a simple and direct manner of dealing with people. He said exactly what he thought each and every time you talked with him making him very predictable.

In his time with the Fire Marshal’s Office John saw many scenes he probably wished he hadn’t but always managed it in a professional manner. John investigated fires that took peoples lives and others started by individuals in addition to about every type of accidental fire imaginable. John also saw a lot of change in the way fires are investigated. In fact, John started five years before the NFPA issued its first edition of 921 *“Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations.”*

I will always remember John as the investigator with “Midnight.” Midnight was a beloved dog John worked well with for a number of years. We wish John well in his retirement and hope he’ll come and see us sometime.

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## MEFIRS – Maine Fire Incident Reporting System

	Current Statistics 2011*	Final Statistics for 2010
Total Calls:	9,055	74,840
Fire Calls:	385	3,439**
Rescue Calls:	6,125	49,754
All others:	2,545	25,647
Fire Departments Reporting	106	180
Total Fire Dollar Loss	\$3,425,727	\$27,511,716
Civilian Fire Related Injuries	5	37
Fire Service Fire Related Injuries	2	31
Civilian Fire Related Deaths	17***	9***
Fire Service Fire Related Deaths	0***	0***

\* The Fire Marshal's Office will have all data for 2010 in by June-July of 2011.

\*\* Represents single incidents only.

\*\*\* Based on SFMO Investigations

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### *End of the Year*

**This is the time of year when we finalize the data for the previous year though some stragglers who will add some data later on this year.**

**When we compare 2009 to 2010 there are a lot of positive signs in terms of basic percentage changes. For instance, total calls dropped 4 %. Fire calls dropped 10% which is significant. EMS calls as well went down 2%. Another encouraging sign was the total dollar loss from fire which showed a decrease of 31%. All other calls however increased 10% from 2009 to 2010.**

**On the injury and death side 2010 showed mixed results. Civilian fire injuries decreased 8% and civilian fire deaths as well by 36%. In fact, civilian fire deaths for 2010 were the lowest they have ever been since we began keeping track. The ten year average for fire deaths is about 16 in contrast to 2010's 9. On the other hand fire service related fire injuries increased 3% but there were no fire service fatalities.**

**Overall 190 fire departments reported through the MEFIRS system in 2009 in contrast to 180 in 2010 which is back down to average since 2004. It's obvious we'd like more and more departments to report so that when we go to the legislature or attempt to make rules we have the justification in numbers at hand.**

**I often wonder about the civilian injury numbers because Maine's CDC will report about 60 or more fire/flame related injuries each year and that's only hospital discharges! If you add in outpatient treatment the numbers would increase. Injuries add significant cost to fire so the fire service should do it's best to report that when it occurs. It should be noted that Maine's CDC will pick up events where there was no fire department response so the numbers will never be equal.**

**Perhaps the most startling statistic above is the increase of civilian fire fatalities from 2010 to 2011. Using commonly employed figure of five million dollars per life, Maine fires have cost us \$85,000,000 in fire deaths alone this year.**

**For information on MEFIRS contact us at 626-3872. Thank you.**

***"Fight Fire with Facts"***



<http://www.smokefreeforme.org/>

## **MAINE FIREWATCH**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

As I reported in our last issue, Maine has gotten off to a bad start in 2011 as far as fire fatalities go. As of this issue we have 17 reported fire fatalities. Certainly, among the most unusual of those is the Biddeford plane crash and fire.

Pictured below is the small plane that crashed into the home starting a fire that killed the pilot but fortunately spared the occupants of the home.



Biddeford Plane Crash

The pilot of the plane apparently had engine trouble and the plane faltered coming to a crash landing on top of the home.

A three story building of mixed commercial and residential occupancy located on Maine Street was severely damaged by fire causing interior structural collapse. The origin of the fire was in the stairwell area between the first and second floors and the cause was not determined due to the extent of damage to the structure. The possible accidental malfunction

of electrical wiring could not be ruled out. The fire department did a great job containing this one (see picture below).



Brunswick Fire. Photo by Steve McCausland, PIO DPS

Too often we see brush fires in spring that have disastrous outcomes. In fact, one of the public service announcements the Fire Marshal aired last spring focused specifically on this topic. Tragically, the burned hillside shown below with Forest Ranger Matt Bennett is the result of a brush fire that got out of control and took the life an 85 year-old Buxton man.



Photo by Tim Greenway



Winterport Church Fire, Photo by Kevin Kratka



In another unusual and tragic fire, the Winterport Calvary Apostolic Church (pictured above right) was set on fire and destroyed. This fire was set by an individual who also doused himself with accelerant and committed suicide. The Winterport Fire Department was assisted by other firefighters from Prospect, Stockton Springs, Frankfort, Bangor and Newburgh.

It only got stranger as we moved through the spring of 2011 season as this fire illustrates. In this Augusta fire the driver of a truck runs into a house starting a fire then flees the scene but not before he essentially destroyed the home.



What you see below is the damage done to another church, this one being the Unitarian Universalist Church in Brunswick. The fire was believed to have started due to bad wiring. The church contained a pulpit Bible inscribed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which fortunately survived the fire. No one was hurt and the church was by no means a total loss thanks to the quick work of the Brunswick Fire Department.



## This Month in Fire History

LaSalle Hotel fire kills 61, Chicago (IL), 1946  
K-Mart warehouse fire loss worth \$190 million (2003 dollars), Falls Twp (PA), 1982  
Carteret Shopping Center fire loss worth \$37 million (2003 dollars), Carteret (IL), 1974  
Hotel Vendome fire kills 9 firefighters, Boston (MA), 1972  
Upstairs Lounge fire kills 32, New Orleans (LA), 1973  
Aerlex Corporation fireworks plant fire kills 21, Hallett (OK), 1985  
Maury County Jail fire kills 42, Columbia (TN), 1977  
Forest fire, loss worth \$334 million (2003 dollars), Santa Barbara County (CA), 1990  
LP-gas tank car derailment fire kills 23, Meldrim (GA), 1959  
Flammable Fabrics Act takes effect, 1954  
First NFPA Committee on Safety to Life is appointed, 1913

### *Augusta, Maine Opera House Block Fire July 4, 1896*

The Fine New Opera House Block Burned which contained a theatre, city offices and Stores on ground floor. The fire was believed to be the result of fireworks. AUGUSTA, Me., July 4. - The Opera House block was destroyed by fire tonight, the fire being discovered shortly before midnight.

It was rebuilt at a cost of \$40,000 by [Hon. J. Manchester Haynes](#) in the summer of 1891.

On its site stood Granite Hall block, destroyed by fire in 1890.

It is not now known whether the block will be rebuilt or not. Its loss will be much felt in Augusta as it contained the fine Opera House. It contained also city government and city treasurer's rooms and offices.

On the street floor were the store of [E. W. Church](#), grocer; Augusta Deposit and Trust Company, café, and [Charles K. Partridge](#), druggist. It is located opposite the post office and the total loss will probably reach \$60,000 of which there is partial insurance on the building.

The fire is supposed to have caught in the rear in a sub-passageway.

The cause is supposed to have been fire crackers.

*Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, Bangor, ME 4 Jul 1896*



## UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Office of the Maine Fire Marshal will sponsor a seminar on National Fire Protection Association *Life Safety Code* # 101, 2009 edition.

The time and place of this event will be posted on our website when confirmed.



## THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

### "Teaching Today for a Safer Tomorrow"

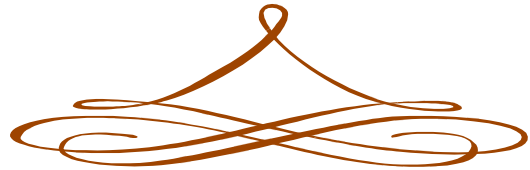
October 14 & 15, 2011  
Ramada Inn in Saco, Maine

The conference will include keynote speaker Jim Crawford of Vision 20/20 among other great speakers and presenters. For more information on the conference go to:

<http://www.ptbf.org/>

*If you have an announcement or upcoming event you'd like to post in this newsletter please feel free to forward it to us using the contact information below. The next issue will be in September 2011.*

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The *Maine Fire Marshal News* is an electronic publication of the Maine State Fire Marshal's Office.

Editors: Richard E. Taylor & Lori L. Gunn

To submit articles for publication contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (207) 626-3870 and ask to speak with the editors. You may also e-mail an article or comment to [Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov](mailto:Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov)

Articles submitted for publication in this newsletter from outside sources do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State Fire Marshal's Office.

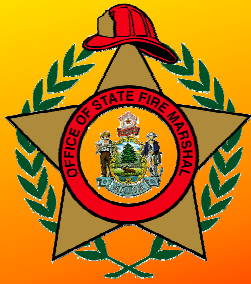
All articles are subject to an editorial staff review prior to inclusion. For a copy of submission requirements contact the editorial staff.

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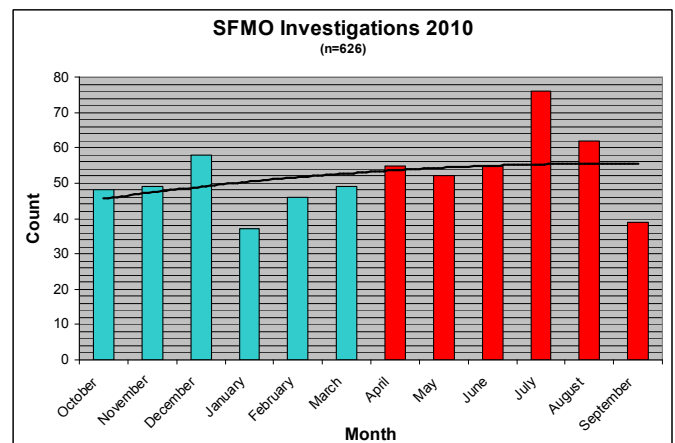
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Would you let your child play with fire?

Every year thousands of Americans, mostly children, are hurt by consumer fireworks such as sparklers and firecrackers. Many are burned, scarred or disfigured by fireworks that are legal, but still very dangerous and cause fires. This year, an alliance of health and safety advocates asks you to keep fireworks from hurting your family. The risk is too great.

*Leave fireworks to the professionals.*

National Fire Protection Association along with American Academy of Family Physicians • American Academy of Ophthalmology • American Academy of Pediatrics • American Association for Hand Surgery • American Association of Public Health Physicians • American Burn Association • American College of Emergency Physicians • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • Emergency Nurses Association • Fire Department Safety Officers Association • International Association of Arson Investigators • International Association of Fire Chiefs • International Association of Fire Fighters • International Fire Marshals Association • Metropolitan Fire Chiefs • National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners • National Association of School Nurses • National Association of State Fire Marshals • National Volunteer Fire Council • Prevent Blindness America

## **SACO FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS A NEW FIRE STATION**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The Saco Fire Department has a new fire station. The department began their push for the new facility back in the 1970s but it took until 2009 to get all the citizens and town officials on board to support the project. The outcome is considerable as anyone who has visited the new facility on North Street in Saco will testify.

Voters of Saco approved the 21,600 Sq. Ft. in a special election held back in February of

2010. The project, which was finished on schedule, includes an administrative wing on the first floor, firefighter living quarters, a kitchen-dining area, laundry, and fitness room. There are individual sleeping rooms on the second floor that include a bed, desk and bureau. Chief Duross said it is “beautiful.”



New Saco Fire Department Building on North St. in Saco

Fire Marshal Dean, who spoke at the dedication, said that this was a great example of good planning, design, and community support. Unlike the old station there is ample room for all of Saco’s fire apparatus. Next time you’re in Saco go take a look.

## **IMAGINE BUYING 18,000 COUNTERFEIT SMOKE DETECTORS?**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

That’s just what happened to the Atlanta Fire & Rescue Department in it’s well intended effort to install smoke detectors in areas of the city most in need.

The detectors were sold by a company called Silver Sales. What distinguishes the alarms is a UL label in the form of a hologram that is also missing the UL number below the label. The detectors had been distributed to areas in need beginning in 2006. Now Atlanta Fire and Rescue is in the process of recalling them. It’s difficult enough to get the devices into homes that need them let alone get the bad ones back out! Good luck Atlanta.

Maine Fire Marshal News



## **THE NFPA ANNOUNCES THE 2011 FIRE PREVENTION WEEK THEME**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The 2011 National Fire Protection Association Fire Prevention Week theme is *“Protect Your Family From Fire.”* This theme is particularly salient because it focuses on the very place where most tragic fires occur: our homes.

As always, the NFPA provides loads of factsheets and other educational materials for teachers, the fire service and families in all languages. Go to the following site for your information today!

<http://www.firepreventionweek.org>

## **NELSON COLLINS AND JOHN MORSE RETIRE**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

The Fire Marshal’s Office is losing two veteran officers. Assistant Fire Marshal Nelson Collins will step down along with fire investigator John Morse. They both will be very much missed.

Nelson Collins began his career with the Fire Marshal’s Office in 1987 as a plans reviewer, moved up to supervise the fire prevention division and eventually became an Assistant Fire Marshal. Nelson probably knows more about fire codes, and fire prevention in the Office of the Fire Marshal, than any individual in Maine. A skilled tactician at telling people things they didn’t want to hear, Nelson managed many delicate situations with considerable skill. His management skill is so good that I don’t believe you could teach someone what Nelson knows. He just knows it intuitively and is a living dictionary when it came to fire code terminology and interpretation.

Aside from the institutional knowledge Nelson possessed, what will be missed most is his kind affable demeanor. Those of us who were lucky to have worked with him are better for it but we will really miss him each and every day. We wish him well in retirement and hope he’ll come and see us when he has some time. Best wishes Nelson!



Assistant Fire Marshal Nelson Collins (left) with Dave Blake in 2008

John Morse began his career as an inspector with the office and then moved over to fire investigations. He started in 1981. John was a smart investigator with a simple and direct manner of dealing with people. He said exactly what he thought each and every time you talked with him making him very predictable.

In his time with the Fire Marshal’s Office John saw many scenes he probably wished he hadn’t but always managed it in a professional manner. John investigated fires that took peoples lives and others started by individuals in addition to about every type of accidental fire imaginable. John also saw a lot of change in the way fires are investigated. In fact, John started five years before the NFPA issued its first edition of 921 *“Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations.”*

I will always remember John as the investigator with “Midnight.” Midnight was a beloved dog John worked well with for a number of years. We wish John well in his retirement and hope he’ll come and see us sometime.

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## MEFIRS – Maine Fire Incident Reporting System

	Current Statistics 2011*	Final Statistics for 2010
Total Calls:	9,055	74,840
Fire Calls:	385	3,439**
Rescue Calls:	6,125	49,754
All others:	2,545	25,647
Fire Departments Reporting	106	180
Total Fire Dollar Loss	\$3,425,727	\$27,511,716
Civilian Fire Related Injuries	5	37
Fire Service Fire Related Injuries	2	31
Civilian Fire Related Deaths	17***	9***
Fire Service Fire Related Deaths	0***	0***

\* The Fire Marshal's Office will have all data for 2010 in by June-July of 2011.

\*\* Represents single incidents only.

\*\*\* Based on SFMO Investigations

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### *End of the Year*

**This is the time of year when we finalize the data for the previous year though some stragglers who will add some data later on this year.**

**When we compare 2009 to 2010 there are a lot of positive signs in terms of basic percentage changes. For instance, total calls dropped 4 %. Fire calls dropped 10% which is significant. EMS calls as well went down 2%. Another encouraging sign was the total dollar loss from fire which showed a decrease of 31%. All other calls however increased 10% from 2009 to 2010.**

**On the injury and death side 2010 showed mixed results. Civilian fire injuries decreased 8% and civilian fire deaths as well by 36%. In fact, civilian fire deaths for 2010 were the lowest they have ever been since we began keeping track. The ten year average for fire deaths is about 16 in contrast to 2010's 9. On the other hand fire service related fire injuries increased 3% but there were no fire service fatalities.**

**Overall 190 fire departments reported through the MEFIRS system in 2009 in contrast to 180 in 2010 which is back down to average since 2004. It's obvious we'd like more and more departments to report so that when we go to the legislature or attempt to make rules we have the justification in numbers at hand.**

**I often wonder about the civilian injury numbers because Maine's CDC will report about 60 or more fire/flame related injuries each year and that's only hospital discharges! If you add in outpatient treatment the numbers would increase. Injuries add significant cost to fire so the fire service should do it's best to report that when it occurs. It should be noted that Maine's CDC will pick up events where there was no fire department response so the numbers will never be equal.**

**Perhaps the most startling statistic above is the increase of civilian fire fatalities from 2010 to 2011. Using commonly employed figure of five million dollars per life, Maine fires have cost us \$85,000,000 in fire deaths alone this year.**

**For information on MEFIRS contact us at 626-3872. Thank you.**

***"Fight Fire with Facts"***



<http://www.smokefreeforme.org/>

## **MAINE FIREWATCH**

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

As I reported in our last issue, Maine has gotten off to a bad start in 2011 as far as fire fatalities go. As of this issue we have 17 reported fire fatalities. Certainly, among the most unusual of those is the Biddeford plane crash and fire.

Pictured below is the small plane that crashed into the home starting a fire that killed the pilot but fortunately spared the occupants of the home.



Biddeford Plane Crash

The pilot of the plane apparently had engine trouble and the plane faltered coming to a crash landing on top of the home.

A three story building of mixed commercial and residential occupancy located on Maine Street was severely damaged by fire causing interior structural collapse. The origin of the fire was in the stairwell area between the first and second floors and the cause was not determined due to the extent of damage to the structure. The possible accidental malfunction

of electrical wiring could not be ruled out. The fire department did a great job containing this one (see picture below).



Brunswick Fire. Photo by Steve McCausland, PIO DPS

Too often we see brush fires in spring that have disastrous outcomes. In fact, one of the public service announcements the Fire Marshal aired last spring focused specifically on this topic. Tragically, the burned hillside shown below with Forest Ranger Matt Bennett is the result of a brush fire that got out of control and took the life an 85 year-old Buxton man.



Photo by Tim Greenway



Winterport Church Fire, Photo by Kevin Kratka

In another unusual and tragic fire, the Winterport Calvary Apostolic Church (pictured above right) was set on fire and destroyed. This fire was set by an individual who also doused himself with accelerant and committed suicide. The Winterport Fire Department was assisted by other firefighters from Prospect, Stockton Springs, Frankfort, Bangor and Newburgh.

It only got stranger as we moved through the spring of 2011 season as this fire illustrates. In this Augusta fire the driver of a truck runs into a house starting a fire then flees the scene but not before he essentially destroyed the home.



What you see below is the damage done to another church, this one being the Unitarian Universalist Church in Brunswick. The fire was believed to have started due to bad wiring. The church contained a pulpit Bible inscribed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which fortunately survived the fire. No one was hurt and the church was by no means a total loss thanks to the quick work of the Brunswick Fire Department.



## This Month in Fire History

LaSalle Hotel fire kills 61, Chicago (IL), 1946  
K-Mart warehouse fire loss worth \$190 million (2003 dollars), Falls Twp (PA), 1982  
Carteret Shopping Center fire loss worth \$37 million (2003 dollars), Carteret (IL), 1974  
Hotel Vendome fire kills 9 firefighters, Boston (MA), 1972  
Upstairs Lounge fire kills 32, New Orleans (LA), 1973  
Aerlex Corporation fireworks plant fire kills 21, Hallett (OK), 1985  
Maury County Jail fire kills 42, Columbia (TN), 1977  
Forest fire, loss worth \$334 million (2003 dollars), Santa Barbara County (CA), 1990  
LP-gas tank car derailment fire kills 23, Meldrim (GA), 1959  
Flammable Fabrics Act takes effect, 1954  
First NFPA Committee on Safety to Life is appointed, 1913

### *Augusta, Maine Opera House Block Fire July 4, 1896*

The Fine New Opera House Block Burned which contained a theatre, city offices and Stores on ground floor. The fire was believed to be the result of fireworks. AUGUSTA, Me., July 4. - The Opera House block was destroyed by fire tonight, the fire being discovered shortly before midnight.

It was rebuilt at a cost of \$40,000 by [Hon. J. Manchester Haynes](#) in the summer of 1891.

On its site stood Granite Hall block, destroyed by fire in 1890.

It is not now known whether the block will be rebuilt or not. Its loss will be much felt in Augusta as it contained the fine Opera House. It contained also city government and city treasurer's rooms and offices.

On the street floor were the store of [E. W. Church](#), grocer; Augusta Deposit and Trust Company, café, and [Charles K. Partridge](#), druggist. It is located opposite the post office and the total loss will probably reach \$60,000 of which there is partial insurance on the building.

The fire is supposed to have caught in the rear in a sub-passageway.

The cause is supposed to have been fire crackers.

*Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, Bangor, ME 4 Jul 1896*



## UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



The Office of the Maine Fire Marshal will sponsor a seminar on National Fire Protection Association *Life Safety Code* # 101, 2009 edition.

The time and place of this event will be posted on our website when confirmed.



## THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATION CONFERENCE

### "Teaching Today for a Safer Tomorrow"

October 14 & 15, 2011  
Ramada Inn in Saco, Maine

The conference will include keynote speaker Jim Crawford of Vision 20/20 among other great speakers and presenters. For more information on the conference go to:

<http://www.ptbf.org/>

*If you have an announcement or upcoming event you'd like to post in this newsletter please feel free to forward it to us using the contact information below. The next issue will be in September 2011.*

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To submit articles for publication contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (207) 626-3870 and ask to speak with the editors. You may also e-mail an article or comment to [Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov](mailto:Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov)

Articles submitted for publication in this newsletter from outside sources do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State Fire Marshal's Office.

All articles are subject to an editorial staff review prior to inclusion. For a copy of submission requirements contact the editorial staff.

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